

St Mary's CofE Primary School, Deane

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105203
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336448
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
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Headteacher	Mrs Diane Jeffries
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 10 lessons and also carried out shorter visits to classrooms. They met with pupils, staff, governors, parents, carers and an officer from the local authority to discuss the work of the school. They also looked at a range of other evidence including pupils' books, the school's assessment and tracking data, planning, policies and school improvement documents. Parents and carers submitted 27 questionnaires that were all read and analysed by the team. Inspectors also looked at questionnaires from the pupils and staff.

- the ways teachers ensure that more-able pupils reach their full potential
- the teaching and learning of science
- the progress of girls in lessons
- the extent to which the school is helping pupils to improve their attendance.

Information about the school

This average-sized primary school is situated on the outskirts of the town. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably greater than that found nationally. Nursery children attend for two half-day sessions in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage Unit, where there is also a separate Reception class. A large majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The school has received the International Schools Award and the Healthy Schools Award. Since the last inspection the school has undergone considerable disruptions to staffing for a variety of reasons. This has twice resulted in significant restructuring of the senior leadership team, as well as changes to class teaching. There is a children's centre on the same site run by the local authority. This provides pre-school childcare and is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is improving. It is an enriching and caring place where children enjoy learning and achieve satisfactorily. Many aspects of its work are good and children do well in certain areas of their development. In particular, behaviour is good and there is a strong sense of community. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the well-planned interventions they receive. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and appreciate the hard work of the staff in ensuring that children are safe and happy. Academic progress is satisfactory overall, but it is not consistent through the school.

Attainment in test results at the end of Year 6 has remained below national averages for the past three years. Pupils who start school well below the expected levels for their age have not made sufficiently rapid progress to gain the ground needed to reach national average levels. Similarly, more-able pupils have not been sufficiently challenged to reach the higher levels of which they are capable. However, there is evidence that pupils' progress has started to improve this year. Good progress is now evident in some year groups, particularly in Year 6 where some pupils are making excellent progress. Least progress is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the provision does not lead to rapid enough gains in some areas of learning. More-able pupils across the school from the Nursery to Year 5 are still not working at the higher levels of which they are capable. Other outcomes are good. The pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They contribute well to their school and local communities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In some classrooms it is good and in the rest it is rapidly improving. The curriculum is a now a strength of the school because it promotes high levels of enjoyment and interest. Much work has been done to extend and enrich the way all subjects are taught. Teachers and teaching assistants work creatively to plan lessons that are fun and there are lots of clubs that the pupils value and enjoy after school. The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory. The track record of improvement since the last inspection has been somewhat limited by staffing changes. However, some things are clearly stronger, in particular the curriculum and the engagement of pupils in their own and other communities. The quality of teaching has improved and continues to get stronger. While attendance remains low, current figures show that this is rising as a result of the school's efforts. However, there remain a small number of families who are proving harder to assist. In the determined efforts to improve the school, monitoring is extensive. Sometimes, this can get in the way of clarity and so there are too many priorities relating to provision rather than outcomes. Despite this, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The school's evaluation of

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its effectiveness is broadly accurate. A highly motivated team is now established and has already increased the pace of improvement. There are clear signs that academic outcomes are beginning to catch up with other pupil outcomes, though this is not yet sustained. Some aspects of leadership and management are good. The school engages well with most parents and carers. Other partnerships are strong and make a difference to the well-being of the pupils. The school works well to promote community cohesion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of more-able pupils throughout the school by:
 - identifying, with immediate effect, those capable of reaching higher levels in all classes, including the Nursery
 - ensuring that teachers' planning consistently identifies higher levels of learning for those pupils.
- Ensure good progress across all areas of learning by April 2011 for children in the Nursery and the Reception Year by:
 - identifying more clearly which outcomes need to improve
 - planning more specific teaching of ability groups with learning at different levels
 - improving the quality and range of activities and resources available for children to choose.
- Improve attendance levels to at least the national average for the academic year 2010 to 2011 and thereafter by:
 - seeking the views of pupils to ensure that rewards for good attendance are sufficiently motivating
 - targeting the families of persistent absentees and taking whatever action is needed.
- Demonstrate by the next inspection a strong track record of improvement by:
 - streamlining the amount of paperwork generated by monitoring and tracking
 - using information more economically in order to gain clear and focused analysis of strengths and weaknesses
 - prioritising and sharpening the focus on raising attainment and securing consistently good progress.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

It is clear that pupils enjoy learning at St Mary's. They participate well in lessons, respond well to questioning and are keen to improve their work. Most work well when asked to cooperate with others and many are able to work independently. During the

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past three years, many pupils starting school have had skills and knowledge below or well below the expected levels and, by the end of Year 6, many were still below the national averages, despite satisfactory progress overall. This is because they have not been making the more rapid progress that would have been required for them to catch up with levels achieved by other pupils nationally. This is starting to change and, currently, some are now making more rapid progress. Current Year 6 pupils are on target to attain at least national average levels in this year's tests. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the well-planned interventions they receive. During the inspection, girls were achieving as well as boys. In other aspects of their learning and development pupils are doing well. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and do so with a sense of pride. They are able to talk with maturity about sensitive issues and much evidence was seen during the inspection of pupils being caring and considerate towards each other. Incidents of bullying are rare. The pupils know a lot about other cultures in the UK and globally. Zero tolerance of racism is well understood by all and well expressed by those who discussed this with inspectors. Pupils' workplace skills are satisfactory and attainment in basic skills and attendance are improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall; learning and progress are not consistently good across all year groups. This is because some teachers do not plan sufficiently well to adapt or extend learning to meet the needs of different ability groups. They will often provide different tasks, questions or resources, but this is not sufficient to move the learning on within each lesson. In some classes, too much teaching is aimed at the whole class and so some pupils become restless because the work is either too easy, too hard or they have had to listen for too long. Throughout the school, teachers' skills in questioning are very good indeed. They are also good at giving clear instructions and planning lessons that will interest and engage pupils. Year 2 pupils were thoroughly enjoying building a beach prior to writing about it in their literacy lesson. Teachers spend a lot of time carefully marking pupils' work. They also use a variety of approaches to help pupils assess their own work so that the pupils know how to improve. The curriculum is good. Improvements to the teaching of science are having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and attainment in this subject, after a considerable downturn in the 2009 test results. Similarly, information and communication technology is rapidly becoming a strength of the school's provision. For example, the new virtual learning environment is encouraging more and more pupils to extend their learning at home. Enrichment opportunities are well developed and there is a strong emphasis on gardening and ecology, which involves much practical learning outdoors. The good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe and know how to behave. The school is making efforts to raise attendance and has had a measure of success in improving the attendance of some pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leadership team and governors are motivated to improve the school and care very much about the pupils. The drive for improvement is clearly embedded at all staff levels. There have been ambitious plans for improving some outcomes for pupils, in particular through the changes to the curriculum. Past disruptions to staffing have clearly had an impact on the pace of improvement, but the enthusiastic and now stable team is working hard to rectify this. Challenging targets have been set and are regularly reviewed. There is extensive monitoring of many aspects of the school's work. This is

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not always used effectively to clarify the areas for improvement, due to the volume of information that needs to be distilled. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and prevents discrimination is satisfactory. The school is taking effective steps to improve teaching and there are recent signs that the pace of pupils' progress is starting to increase as a result. The staff and governors are effective in safeguarding pupils. Policies and procedures adopt good practice and so pupils are very secure and staff are well briefed. Training is of good quality and there is extensive collaborative working with other agencies on child protection. Likewise, other partnerships are effective in promoting pupils' learning and well-being. The school is effective in promoting community cohesion, which is well planned and regularly evaluated.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children start in the Nursery over two thirds are below or well below the expected levels of skills and knowledge for their age. Most make satisfactory progress during their first two years at St Mary's. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, many have improved considerably in their personal, social and emotional development. In other areas of learning they are still below average, particularly in reading, writing and number work. Most children are happy and content. They understand how to behave and most work well together and independently. Most enjoy learning. For example, Reception Year children were having great fun measuring bowls of pretend milk to feed

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the teddies during the inspection. This was linked to a previous farm visit which also helped to extend their learning. All the staff know children well. They carry out daily observations and assessment and careful records are kept of each child's progress. The satisfactory range of activities provided keeps the children busy, but does not always extend the learning sufficiently well. This is particularly so for those who are ready to move on to higher levels of challenge. Children are well cared for and all statutory requirements for health and safety are met to the required level. There is a clear action plan to improve the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage, but this is not based on a clear enough analysis of children's outcomes. Self-evaluation does not include a year-on-year analysis of performance, so it is not always clear where priorities should lie. Action plans tend to focus mainly on developing new aspects of provision. Suitable staff training takes place and the day-to-day management of planning and other systems is effectively communicated to all staff. Parents and carers receive clear information about their children. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to be supported in helping with learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires received from parents and carers was extremely low. Nearly all responses that were received were positive. Most comments expressed appreciation of the way children are supported by the school. The only negative comment related to a previous individual incident. The inspectors agree that evidence seen during this inspection confirmed good care, guidance and support by the school, including the management of injuries.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's CofE Primary School, Deane to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 262 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	33	15	63	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	29	16	67	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	50	11	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	38	13	54	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	29	15	63	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	42	13	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for making the inspectors and me so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching lessons and looking at your work. You answered our questions helpfully in discussions and on the questionnaires. We were also impressed with your good behaviour.

We judge that St Mary's is a satisfactory school. This means that the school provides you with all you need to make satisfactory progress in your learning. Some things are even better. Those of you who need special help make especially good progress. You are all good at understanding healthy lifestyles. You say that you feel very safe in school. This is because the care, guidance and support the school gives you are good. The adults do everything they can to make sure you are safe and happy. We think that the new changes to the curriculum are great. You have more to do now to make learning interesting. For example, in science you are doing more experiments and there are lots of new learning opportunities on the computers. One thing that isn't so good is the attendance. Many of you are making a real effort to come to school every day. Well done! However, a few are still taking too much time off. This is one of the things we have asked the school to keep working to improve. There are also three other things that we would like the school to do. These are:

- to plan different challenges for those of you who can learn at higher levels
- to help the Nursery and Reception Year children to learn more quickly through a greater and more interesting choice of activities
- to keep clearer and simpler checks on how the school is doing each year so that when the inspectors come again they can see lots of good improvements.

We know that the headteacher and all the staff and governors work very hard and want to do their best for you. We are sure that you will want to help them by continuing to do your best work and attending regularly. In this way, everyone will be helping to make St Mary's an even better school. We wish you every success on this journey.

Yours sincerely

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